



Book Review

Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly: A Biblical Model of Church Leadership

by Lewis A. Parks and Bruce C. Birch, (Abingdon, 2004)

Lew Parks and Bruce Birch have made a marvelous contribution to church leaders as they bring together Bible, theology, and leadership studies for their model of church leadership. The book is enriched by the incisive exegetical work of Birch on 1 and 2 Samuel, the extensive pastoral and judicatory experience of Parks, and the astute theological sensibilities and writing gifts of both authors.

Their book is based on two strong convictions. First, leadership is the most crucial factor in the reform of the church today. Second, the way we talk about church leadership has little to do with the church's scripture or theology. To address both concerns, they have integrated in a seamless way biblical insights, theological understandings, the best secular work on leadership, and clear examples from church life, particularly pastoral ministry.

As with the biblical witness, no easy answers are provided. Rather, they engage in a dialogue with the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, texts that portray the people of Israel in frequent transition, and hence in need of effective leadership. We come to see ourselves, perhaps more than we might wish, in Saul and David and the events of their time.

Birch is Dean and Woodrow W. and Mildred B. Miller Professor of Biblical Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary and Parks is Associate Professor of Theology, Ministry, and Congregational Development and director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Wesley.